

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENTI 04456 01 OF 02 221354Z

41/51

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 CU-02

A-01 FBO-02 AID-05 IGA-01 OPR-02 SY-05 USSS-00 INRE-00

SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 OC-05 CCO-00 /074 W

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O R 221150Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4523

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL UDORN

CINCPAC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENTIANE 4456

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, LA, US

SUBJ: BROUHAHA CONCERNING CHARGE'S RESIDENCE

SUMMARY: AS PART OF PROGRAM TO CONSOLIDATE RESIDENCES OF
RESIDUAL PERSONNEL IN TWO MAIN AREAS, CHARGE MOVED JUNE
18 TO HOUSE FORMERLY OCCUPIED BY USAID DIRECTOR/ECONOMIC
COUNSELOR CHARLES MANN. SINCE MID-DAY JUNE 20, TWO PATHET
LAO SOLDIERS HAVE STOOD GUARD IN YARD AROUND THE CLOCK, AND
AT TIMES REPRESENTATIVES OF USAID PROTEST COMMITTEE AND
STUDENTS HAVE ALSO DROPPED IN, CLAIMING TO BE
"PROTECTING" PROPERTY UNTIL USAID-FUNDED FURNISHINGS AND
APPLIANCES COULD BE REMOVED. FONMIN OFFICIAL PROMISED
MID-DAY JUNE 20 THESE PERSONS WOULD LEAVE
BUT NEVER FOLLOWED THROUGH, AND HE AND OTHER OFFICIALS
WERE UNAVAILABLE JUNE 21. SAME EVENING IMPOLITE ULTIMATUM
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PAGE 02 VIENTI 04456 01 OF 02 221354Z

IN LAO WAS SENT CHARGE ADVISING HIM TO LEAVE HOUSE AND STATING

THAT FURNISHINGS WOULD BE REMOVED BY NOON JUNE 22 (CHARGE HOWEVER ONLY RECEIVED PAPER THAT MORNING); IF HE FAILED TO COMPLY OR TRIED TO INTERFERE, THERE WOULD BE ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES.

THIS LED TO CONSIDERABLE SEARCHING AROUND TOWN FOR RESPONSIBLE LPF OFFICIALS MORNING JUNE 22. CHARGE SAW MINECON SOTH PHETRASY INCONCLUSIVELY. AT NOON EMBOFFS MET STUDENT PROTESTORS IN CHARGE'S YARD. STUDENTS ADDED NEW POINT: HOUSE BELONGS TO FORMER MINDEF SISOUK AND HAS THEREFORE BEEN "NATIONALIZED." STUDENTS WERE THEN JOINED BY SOUBANH, FONMIN CHIEF DE CABINET, WHO FINALLY PERSUADED TPBM TO LEAVE IN THE UNDERSTANDING HE WOULD LATER MEET WITH CHARGE.

LATER AFTERNOON, MEETING OF CHARGE AND SOUBANH, RESULTED IN FOLLOWING UNDERSTANDING:

A) MINFONAF WOULD SEND FORMAL NOTE TO EMBASSY THAT HOUSE HAD BEEN NATIONALIZED;

B) CHARGE COULD STAY IN HOUSE (SOUBANH INITIALLY SOUGHT TO PERSUADE CHARGE TO GO ELSEWHERE UNTIL JUNE 30 WHEN "ALL WOULD BE SETTLED");

C) SOUBANH WOULD REACH PROTESTERS TO EXPLAIN SITUATION, AND PL OFFICER TO HAVE SOLDIERS REMOVED;

D) SOUBANH THOUGHT THERE WOULD BE NO DIFFICULTIES IN OUR KEEPING HOUSE AT LEAST THROUGH SEPT 30 WHEN LEASE EXPIRED, AND WE WOULD PAY RENT DIRECTLY TO GOVERNMENT COMMENT: PROTESTERS WERE QUITE HEATED BECAUSE THEY CONSIDERED CHARGE'S MOVE WAS TRICK TO HOLD A HOUSE BELONGING TO SISOUK AND USAID FURNISHINGS IN CONTRAVENTION OF PGNU DECISIONS. CLEARLY SOUBANH WAS CAUGHT BY SURPRISE ON THIS ONE; HE COMPLAINED WE SHOULD HAVE NOTIFIED MINFONAF OF CHARGE'S MOVE. IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PRESENT TURMOIL IN LAOS, WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD NOT MAKE BIG THING OF INCIDENT WHICH UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF COURSE INFRINGES ON DIPLOMATIC PRACTICES. WE BELIEVE SITUATION HAS BEEN QUIETENED FOR TIME BEING, BUT BASIC ISSUE OF MEMBERSHIP OF USAID PROPERTIES REMAINS UNRESOLVED. THIS WEEK SHOULD DETERMINE THE FUTURE COURSE OF EVENTS. UNFORTUNATELY, PRESS HAS GOTTEN HOLD OF INCIDENT. JUNE 21 LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 VIENTI 04456 01 OF 02 221354Z

BANGKOK POST CARRIED BANNER HEADLINE "LAOTIANS HARASS TOP US ENVOY" OVER ARTICLE WITH LITTLE CONTENT. WHOLE INCIDENT IS ILLUSTRATIVE OF KIND OF DIFFICULTY WE HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCING. WE HOPE THAT WE CAN KEEP SOME PROSPECTIVE OVER WHAT IS A SMALL INCIDENT IN A FAR LARGER HAPPENING. END SUMMARY.

1. WE HAVE NOT REPORTED PREVIOUSLY REGARDING SITUATION

HAVING DO WITH CHARGE'S RESIDENCE, ALTHOUGH AWARE THAT MEDIA WERE COVERING IT, BECAUSE SITUATION AT FIRST SEEMED TRIVIAL AND BECAUSE WE THOUGHT THAT IT MIGHT BE RESOLVED PROMPTLY. THIS HAS NOT PROVED TO BE THE CASE, THE PRESS HAS SEIZED ON IT, AND SO WE ARE FURNISHING THIS DETAILED ACCOUNT.

2. AS WE HAVE DRAWN DOWN THE MISSION, WE HAVE ALSO MOVED RESIDUAL PERSONNEL FROM OUTLYING RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES TO ONE OF TWO GENERAL AREAS -- THE SO-CALLED SILVER CITY AREA NEAR THAT LUANG, AND THE AREA OF SALAKOKTANE IN VICINITY OF AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE. AS PART OF THIS CONSOLIDATION PROCESS, CHARGE MOVED WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18, TO HOUSE OF FORMER USAID DIRECTOR/ECONOMIC COUNSELOR CHARLES MANN IN SALAKOKTANE.

3. AT MID-DAY ON FRIDAY, JUNE 20, A STUDENT DEMONSTRATOR ACCOMPANIED BY TWO PATHET LAO SOLDIERS ARRIVED AT CHARGE'S NEW RESIDENCE TO "GUARD" IT UNTIL OTHER STUDENTS AND PATHET LAO COULD COME TO REMOVE FURNITURE AND APPLIANCES FROM HOUSE FOR STORAGE AT KILOMETER 9 IN ANTICIPATION OF TOTAL TURN-OVER OF USAID PROPERTIES. THIS OF COURSE REMAINS IMPORTANT OUTSTANDING ISSUE BETWEEN PGNU AND USG, BUT WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO KEEP DEMONSTRATORS (WHO HAVE THE USAID LEASE FILES AND INVENTORIES OF GOVERNMENT-OWNED APPLIANCES AND FURNITURE) FROM TAKING SUCH PROPERTIES.

4. CHARGE IMMEDIATELY CONTACTED MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, REPORTED WHAT HAD HAPPENED, AND INSISTED THAT THE STUDENT AND THE PATHET LAO BE REMOVED. ATTACHE DE CABINET SOUKTHAVONE KEOLA TOOK NOTE OF CHARGE'S KMMPLAINT AND, AFTER TALKING OVER PHONE WITH STUDENT REP, SAID A TRUCK WOULD BE SENT "TO PICK UP THE PEOPLE." STUDENT DID DEPART AFTERNOON JUNE 20, BUT AT LEAST TWO PATHET LAO JOINT POLICE (ROTATED PERIODICALLY) HAVE REMAINED IN GARDEN OR GARAGE OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 VIENTI 04456 01 OF 02 221354Z

CHARGE'S RESIDENCE SINCE THEN. IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE ON JUNE 21 OR MORNING JUNE 22 TO LOCATE ANYONE IN AUTHORITY AT FOREIGN MINISTRY.

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PAGE 01 VIENTI 04456 02 OF 02 221255Z

51

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 CU-02

A-01 FBO-02 AID-05 IGA-01 OPR-02 SY-05 USSS-00 INRE-00

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O R 221150Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4524

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 VIENTIANE 4456

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5. AT APPROXIMATELY 2130 HOURS JUNE 21 A STATEMENT IN LAO WAS DELIVERED TO CHARGE'S RESIDENCE, ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT SEE IT UNTIL MORNING JUNE 22 AND WE DID NOT HAVE ENGLISH VERSION UNTIL MID-MORNING. DOCUMENT IS SIGNED BY SENTHONG OF USAID PROTEST COMMITTEE AND KHAMHOI, FORMER PRESIDENT OF LAO STUDENT FEDERATION; IT IS ADDRESSED SIMPLY TO "CHRISTIAN A. CHAPMAN," OMITTING ANY TITLE, AND ENTIRE TONE OF LAO ORIGINAL IS QUITE RUDE. ROUGH TRANSLATION IS AS FOLLOWS:

"SUBJECT: MOVE OUT OF THE USAID HOUSE SALAKOKTHONE A-5

"THE ENTIRE USAID PROTEST COMMITTEE FEELS THAT ONE PORTION OF THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROTEST COMMITTEE'S DUTIES IS THE REMOVAL OF USAID PROPERTY FROM HOMES RENTED BY AMERICANS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE CITY, IN ORDER TO STORE THEM AT KM-9 IN PREPARATION FOR THE TURNOVER TO THE PGNU IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE AGREEMENT OF MAY 27TH 1975.

"TO CARRY OUT THE GATHERING TOGETHER OF THIS PROPERTY IN THE HOUSE MENTIONED ABOVE QUICKLY AND EFFICIENTLY, WE ASK LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 VIENTI 04456 02 OF 02 221255Z

THAT YOU MOVE OUT OF THIS HOUSE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE BUT NO LATER THAN 1200 OF JUNE 22, 1975.

"WE WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY BAD THINGS THAT OCCUR IF THERE IS ANY OBSTRUCTION OR TWISTING OF THIS REQUEST AND WE WILL CONSIDER THAT YOU HAVE INTENTIONALLY

CAUSED TROUBLE AND BLOCKED THE PERFORMANCE OF OUR WORK."

(SIGNATURES)

6. IN LIGHT OF THREATENING TONE AND DEADLINE, EMBASSY OFFICERS FANNED OUT AROUND THE CITY THIS MORNING LOOKING FOR RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS OF FOREIGN MINISTRY, JOINT CENTRAL COMMISSION TO IMPLEMENT THE AGREEMENT, OR ANYONE IN AUTHORITY ON LAO PATRIOTIC FRONT SIDE. THEY FOUND NO ONE ABOVE FLUNKY RANK ON LPF SIDE AND SYMPATHETIC BUT IMPOTENT VIENTIANE SIDE OFFICIALS.

7. AT LENGTH CHARGE AND USIS IO DAKS SAW MINISTER OF ECONOMY (AND LPF JCCIA DELEGATION CHAIRMAN) SOTH PHETRASY AT HIS HOUSE LATE MORNING. CHARGE RECOUNTED HISTORY OF EPISODE (PARAS 2-5 ABOVE) TO SOTH AND MADE POINT THAT THIS WAS POTENTIALLY A SERIOUS MATTER. SOTH INQUIRED INTO STATUS OF HOUSE (RENTED FROM FORMER MINDEF SISOUK NA CHAMPASAK BY EMBASSY SINCE 1965, THOUGH OCCUPIED UNTIL RECENTLY BY FORMER USAID DIRECTOR/ECONOMIC COUNSELOR) AND IN GENERAL TRIED TO SLOUGH MATTER OFF AS ONE BETWEEN U.S. MISSION AND LAO EMPLOYEES OF USAID. HE PROMISED VAGUELY TO DO HIS BEST.

8. USIS IO AND EMBOFF WERE AT CHARGE'S RESIDENCE AT NOON, WHEN A NUMBER OF STUDENTS ARRIVED AND REPEATED FAMILIAR ARGUMENTS REGARDING USAID PROPERTY, AND ADDING A COUPLE OF NEW POINTS: A) CHARGE HAD "NOT OBTAINED PERMISSION TO MOVE INTO A USAID HOUSE": B) SINCE HOUSE BELONGS TO FORMER DEFENSE MINISTER SISOUK NA CHAMPASAK, WHO RESIGNED AND FLED LAOS LAST MONTH, HOUSE ITSELF HAS BEEN "NATIONALIZED". STUDENT STOOD DOWN FROM ANY IMMEDIATE ATTEMPT TO REMOVE FURNISHINGS BUT SAID THEY WOULD BE BACK FOR SAME JUNE 23 AND MEANWHILE WANTED CHARGE TO AGREE TO REMOVAL OF CONTENTS.

9. AS THIS DISCUSSION WAS GOING ON, FOREIGN MINISTRY CHEF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 VIENTI 04456 02 OF 02 221255Z

DE CABINET SOUBANH SRITHIRATH AND ECON MINISTRY CHEF DE CABINET KHAMRING SUDDENLY ARRIVED ON SCENE. SOUBANH CLEARLY SIDED WITH STUDENTS BUT ALSO PERSUADED THEM TO DEPART, LEAVING ONLY PATHET LAO POLICE. CHARGE ARRIVED SHORTLY BEFORE SOUBANH'S DEPARTURE AND AGREED TO MEET AGAIN LATER IN AFTER-NOON.

10. SOUBANH RECEIVED CHARGE IN HOUSE OF FONMIN PHOUMI VONGVICHIT, WHERE HE ALSO LIVES. CHARGE GAVE STRAIGHT-FORWARD ACCOUNT OF MOVE; READILY RECOGNIZED SISOUK'S OWNERSHIP, BUT VOLUNTEERED THAT IF PGNU HAD NATIONALIZED HOUSE EMBASSY WOULD OF COURSE ABIDE BY LAO LAW; EMPHASIZED THAT OWNERSHIP OF USAID PROPERTIES REMAINED

IMPORTANT OUTSTANDING ISSUE; AND EXPRESSED VIEW THAT, GIVEN DIMENSIONS OF PROBLEMS BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS, THIS INCIDENT SHOULD BE QUICKLY SETTLED. SOUBANH HAD USAID FILE ON THE HOUSE WHICH VERIFIED WHAT CHARGE HAD SAID. HE WAS MOST FRIENDLY THROUGHOUT AND HEARTILY AGREED WE SHOULD REACH AMICABLE SETTLEMENT. HE POINTED OUT HOWEVER THE DIFFICULTIES OF DEALING WITH PROTESTORS, WHO REPRESENTED "STRONG POPULAR MOVEMENT" AND WHO THOUGHT THAT IN THIS INSTANCE AMERICANS WERE TRYING TO PULL A FAST ONE. HE WONDERED WHETHER CHARGE COULD NOT STAY OUT OF HOUSE UNTIL JUNE 30, BY WHICH DATE ALL PROBLEMS WILL HAVE BEEN RESOLVED. CHARGE STRONGLY DEMURRED, POINTING OUT THIS WAS TANTAMOUNT TO EVICTING REPRESENTATIVE OF USG. FINALLY IT WAS AGREED CHARGE COULD REMAIN IN HOUSE; SOUBANH WOULD SEE PROTESTORS TO EXPLAIN SITUATION AND INSTRUCT PATHET LAO OFFICER TO CALL OFF GUARDS ON JUNE 23 AT LATEST; FOREIGN MINISTRY WOULD SEND FORMAL COMMUNICATION TO EMBASSY THAT HOUSE NATIONALIZED; AND PGNU WOULD PROBABLY AGREE TO LET US KEEP HOUSE UNTIL LEASE RUNS OUT SEPTEMBER 30. (WE WOULD PAY LAST QUARTER'S RENT TO PGNU.)

11. FOR COMMENT, SEE FINAL PARAGRAPH OF SUMMARY.

12. CHARGE TOOK OCCASION TO ASK SOUBANH WHEN FOREIGN MINISTER WOULD RETURN TO VIENTIANE FROM SAM NEUA. SOUBANH SAID HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE THIS COMING WEEK. REPLY TO OUR NOTE 293 OF JUNE 9 (WHICH SOUBANH HAD EARLIER SAID LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 VIENTI 04456 02 OF 02 221255Z

WE COULD EXPECT EARLY IN WEEK) WOULD DEPEND ON FOREIGN MINISTER'S RETURN.
CHAPMAN

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Message Attributes

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